

# How Can We Approach the Profound Mysteries of Revelation 20?

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as we continue our journey through the book of Revelation, we now turn our attention to chapter 20. This chapter follows the dramatic events of chapter 19, where we witnessed Christ's triumphant return and the defeat of the beast and false prophet. As we humbly approach the profound depths of God's Word, let us prayerfully examine [Revelation 20](#), a chapter that builds upon these events and delves deeper into God's prophetic timeline. Our analysis aims to shed light on the messages within, exploring themes of Satan's binding, Christ's millennial reign, and the final judgment. As we study, let's remember that our understanding is limited—we see "as through a glass, darkly" ([1 Corinthians 13:12](#)). Yet, we trust the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth as we seek to comprehend these profound revelations.

Following the execution of the beast and the false prophet, who were cast into the lake of fire ([Revelation 19:20](#)), the opening verses of chapter 20 now reveal the fate of their master, Satan. [Verses 1-3](#) state: "*Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the abyss, closed it, and put a seal on it so that he would no longer deceive the nations until the thousand years were completed. After that, he must be released for a short time.*" These passages present a powerful image of Satan's temporary restraint during Christ's millennial reign. The angel, acting with divine authority, binds the adversary for a thousand years. This binding suggests a period where Satan's influence on the nations is curtailed, allowing Christ and His church to reign unimpeded. This aligns with the prophecy in [Isaiah 2:4](#). This millennium represents a time of Christ's sovereign rule, where His faithful followers participate in His governance over the earth, as promised in [2 Timothy 2:12](#). The concept of binding evil forces is also seen in [Matthew 12:29](#), where Jesus speaks of binding the strong man, symbolizing His power over Satan.

[Verse 4](#): introduces the concept of the millennial reign of Christ: "*Then I saw thrones, and people seated on them who were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and who had not accepted the mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*" This passage reveals the exalted position of Christ's faithful followers during His millennial reign. The thrones and those seated on them suggest a fulfillment of Christ's promise that His disciples would judge the twelve tribes of Israel ([Matthew 19:28](#)). This judgment likely corresponds to the sheep and goat judgment described in [Matthew 25:31-46](#), where nations are judged based on their treatment of Christ's "brothers and sisters" during the tribulation. Notably, the mention of "the souls of those who had been beheaded" suggests that believers who came to faith in Christ during the tribulation period (after the Church rapture) will also be resurrected at this time to reign with Christ. This inclusion emphasizes God's faithfulness to all who endure for His sake, regardless of when they came to faith. The believers' role as kings and judges in Christ's Kingdom is further supported by passages such as [1 Corinthians 6:2-3](#), which states that the saints will judge the world and angels, and [Revelation 5:10](#), which declares that believers will reign on the earth. This elevated status of believers aligns with Paul's assurance in [2 Timothy 2:12](#) that "*if we endure, we will also reign with him.*"

[Verses 5-6](#) distinguish between two resurrections and introduce the concept of the "second death": "*The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.*" The first resurrection appears to be for the righteous, who are granted the privilege of reigning with Christ. The promise that the second death has no power over them offers profound comfort, echoing Jesus' words in [John 11:26](#), "*Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?*"

As we continue with [Verse 7-10](#), Satan's final rebellion and ultimate defeat are described: "*When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle. Their number is like the sand of the sea. They came up across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the encampment of the saints, the beloved city. Then fire came down from heaven and consumed them. The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*" Despite the long period of Satan's restraint, when released, he will immediately return to his deceptive ways. He will deceive the masses, except for Christ's saints who will serve as judges and kings during Christ's millennial reign ([Revelation 20:4](#)). Satan will summon these deceived masses to orchestrate the final war, known as Gog and Magog ([Revelation 20:8](#)), echoing Ezekiel's prophecy ([Ezekiel 38-39](#)). They will attack Jerusalem, likely the capital city during Christ's reign, referred to as "*the beloved city*" ([Revelation 20:9](#)). However, their defeat will be swift and decisive, as fire from heaven will consume them ([Revelation 20:9](#)), reminiscent of God's judgment in [2 Kings 1:10-12](#). This serves as a sobering reminder of the persistent nature of evil ([1 Peter 5:8](#)) and the need for constant vigilance in our spiritual lives ([Ephesians 6:11-13](#)). The rebellion will culminate in Satan's eternal judgment, as he is thrown into the lake of fire to join the beast and the false prophet, where they will be tormented forever ([Revelation 20:10](#)), fulfilling the promise of [Matthew 25:41](#).

The chapter concludes with the sobering image of the final judgment, as detailed in [verse 11-15](#):

*Then I saw a great white throne and one seated on it. Earth and heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books. Then the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; each one was judged according to their works. Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.*

This passage presents a vivid portrayal of the final judgment, distinct from the judgment mentioned in verse 4. God alone presides over this ultimate tribunal. The great white throne symbolizes His absolute purity and authority. The fleeing of earth and heaven suggests the end of the current creation, making way for the new heaven and new earth ([Revelation 21:1](#)), echoing [2 Peter 3:10-13](#). The resurrection of all the dead, both "great and small," indicates that no one is exempt from this judgment, regardless of earthly status, as foretold in [Daniel 12:2](#). The opening of the books represents a comprehensive record of every person's deeds, while the Book of Life contains the names of those saved by grace through faith in Christ. The sea, death, and Hades giving up their dead signifies the second resurrection, where those who rejected Christ during their earthly lives face judgment. This aligns with Jesus' words in [John 5:28-29](#). The judgment according to works doesn't imply salvation by works, but rather demonstrates the justice of God's verdict, as explained in [Romans 2:5-11](#).

This scene mirrors the one in [Matthew 25:31-46](#), where Christ separates the sheep from the goats. The casting of death and Hades into the lake of fire symbolizes death's ultimate defeat ([1 Corinthians 15:26](#)). Those not found in the Book of Life face eternal separation from God in the lake of fire, joining the unholy trio—Dragon, beast, and false prophet. This judgment, as [Hebrews 9:27](#) states, awaits all people after death. This sobering scene underscores the critical importance of faith in Christ and the eternal consequences of our response to God's offer of salvation. It aligns with Paul's description in [2 Thessalonians 1:7-10](#) of the Lord's return to judge and bring eternal destruction to those who don't know God and don't obey the gospel.

In conclusion, Revelation 20 presents a sweeping vision of future events, from Satan's binding to the final judgment. The central messages of the chapter are God's ultimate victory over evil, the vindication of His faithful followers, and the finality of judgment for those who reject His grace. As we contemplate these profound truths, may we be stirred to live lives worthy of our calling, sharing the hope of the gospel with a world in desperate need of God's love and salvation. As we look ahead to Revelation 21, we anticipate a dramatic shift from judgment to renewal. The next chapter will unveil the glorious vision of a new heaven and a new earth, where God will dwell with His people in perfect harmony. This transition reminds us that God's ultimate plan is not destruction, but restoration and eternal fellowship with His redeemed creation.

Let us approach these prophecies with humility, recognizing that "*now we know in part*" ([1 Corinthians 13:12](#)). May this study deepen our faith, strengthen our hope, and increase our love for God and neighbor. As we await the fulfillment of God's promises, both in judgment and in renewal, let us heed the words of Peter: "*Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, it is clear what sort of people you should be in holy conduct and godliness as you wait for the day of God and hasten its coming.*" ([2 Peter 3:11-12](#))

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